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South Carolina Nursing Homes Commit to Providing Higher Quality Care
Program Designed to Improve Care, Promote Dignity and Choice for Residents, and Reduce Staff Turnover

Columbia, SC – The Carolinas Center for Medical Excellence (CCME), formerly Carolina Medical Review, the Medicare Quality Improvement Organization (QIO) in South Carolina, announced today that 44 nursing homes have committed to a three-year quality improvement program. Nursing homes will work closely with CCME to improve quality of life and care for all of South Carolina's nursing home residents (over 36,000 people). The focus will be on management of pressure ulcers, physical restraints, depression and pain.

CCME will also work with nursing homes to individualize the care provided to residents, which includes more resident-directed choices about care and routines as part of daily living. Homes will also learn to identify ways to better integrate into the surrounding community, for example, by having a daycare center for children at the home or by providing meeting space for local organizations. QIOs will also work to help nursing homes identify ways to retain nurturing staff members who are dedicated to high quality care. Improving ways to foster relationships with residents' families and friends will also aid in creating a more stable and comfortable environment for both residents and staff.

"This group of nursing homes, which are truly committed to transforming care, can imagine an environment where residents live their lives in a private and dignified manner and feel a greater respect for the staff as a result," said Lorri Gibbons, RN, BSN, senior interventions specialist for nursing home and home health.

CCME is also encouraging nursing homes statewide to begin using the Nursing Home Information Feedback Tool (NHIFT), a free electronic data collection tool that enables nursing homes to abstract medical record data for new admissions each month. NHIFT also helps guide care by identifying recommended medical practices in the four clinical focus areas.

Quality of care measures for all nursing homes are tracked and reported publicly on the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' Nursing Home Compare Web site. To view Nursing Home Compare, visit <http://www.medicare.gov> and scroll down to select *Compare Nursing Homes in Your Area* under Search Tools.

For more information on these or any of the quality improvement resources available at CCME, contact Lorri Gibbons, RN, BSN, at 803-251-2215.

The Carolinas Center for Medical Excellence is an independent, non-profit corporation that provides leadership, education, and services to promote improvement in the quality and cost effectiveness of healthcare.